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EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

“Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven”

Little children, babies and infants were brought to Jesus; so that he would touch them, pray for them and bless them. Of course, Christ was a very busy man. He was most of the time preaching, teaching and helping people to prepare them to enter the kingdom of God. His disciples, however, were wrong in thinking that He would not have time to receive and bless the little ones, so they rebuked mothers and parents and told them to go away. But Jesus was greatly displeased with the attitude of His disciples, and told them not to forbid little children to come to Him and He said “for of such is the kingdom of God.” (Matthew 19:13,14; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17).

Little children were never brought to Christ so that He would baptize them, but they were brought to Him so that He would touch them, pray for them and bless them. Today many parents take their children, babies, and infants and have them “baptized” in a religious ceremony. In fact, they have them sprinkled with water, and not really baptized. Because baptism means a burial, and a burial in water, according to the Bible (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Acts 8:35-39; Matthew 3:16). The command of

baptism was given by Christ. In Matthew 28:19 He asked his followers to go and make disciples and then baptize them. The word disciple means a learner. How can an infant be taught to become a disciple? In Mark 16:16, Christ said, He who believe and is baptized shall be saved. First one must believe; and to believe one must learn; and to learn one must be taught. Can an infant be taught to believe in Christ and be baptized? Peter told the multitude of his listeners, who had asked the question what they should do, after they had heard about Christ and had believed in Him, to Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2:37 & 38). Likewise, when the eunuch had learned about Christ, and wanted to be baptized, Philip had asked him, if he believed with all his heart? And when the eunuch confessed Christ, then only did Philip baptize him in water. (Acts 8:35-39). The command of baptism, therefore, is for those people who are old enough to hear and understand and believe the gospel of Christ; those who are prepared to repent of sin and confess Christ to be the Son of God. Baptism is not for little children, babies or infants. This truth was remarkably emphasised by events in the Anglican church in 1964 and was published in the New York Times, December 16, 1964, where it was reported that many vicars of that faith would no longer baptize babies, affirming that to do so would be contrary to the Scriptures. The report further quoted clergymen saying, "we are denying adults the right of baptism," by baptizing infants. And rightly so. Because millions of people are never baptized, as the Bible teaches, for the forgiveness of sins, after believing, repenting, and confessing Christ, since they think and believe that they have been already baptized when they were babies. How serious it is! Especially so, when we read what the Bible says about baptism! That it is for the forgiveness of sins!!

But notice, what Christ pointed out about little children. He said: "For of such is the kingdom of heaven." The emphasis is upon child-like character and behaviour, namely, trust, obedience, teachableness, humility, and freedom from malice. Christ, at another place in the Bible said to His disciples: "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3). Since, Christ said about little children that of such is the kingdom of heaven. Then would not a little

child go to heaven, if he dies in his childhood? And if he is to go to heaven, as Christ said that he would, then why one should baptize a little baby? Remember, again, the Bible says that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), and for washing away of sins (Acts 22:16). So what is the conclusion? Well, if one thinks that he or she does not need to be baptized for salvation, as Christ taught one must, in Mark 16:16, because that one was already "baptized" in childhood, then one is living in great spiritual danger. The best thing is to believe what the Bible says and to do what the Bible says. Because the Bible is God's word.

Indian Evangelism

J.C. CHOATE

India has a population of well over one billion people, second only to China in such numbers. It is said that within a reasonable period of time, India will pass China in population. It is not only in the land masses of India and China that such vast numbers of their people live, but think also of the people of these two groups that live in other countries—surely they would account for more than one-fourth of the entire population of the world.

But think further: **every one of these has a precious soul that needs to be saved.** That means that we as the Lord's people have the great responsibility of taking the gospel to all of them, and even to the whole world. Thinking realistically, to deal with India alone sounds like a job beyond our comprehension, and certainly beyond our ability, but with our willingness to accept the challenge, and with God's help, **we can do it.**

One solution would be to let foreign Christians come to do our job for us. But, no—there would never be enough who *would* come or who *could* come, to evangelize such masses of people. And no matter how many might come, foreigners could never do the job by themselves. The logical conclusion is that if India is to be evangelized, the Christians of India must be the ones to take

the gospel to their own people. Outsiders can and must be of some help, but it is those who are already here that will make the difference.

Most would begin to list all of the negatives as to why Indians cannot evangelize India, but there are not enough negatives to keep us from doing the job if we really want to do it. We don't need great numbers or a lot of money. Neither do we have to have buildings, schools, hospitals, and other material things as tools. All we *must* have is a motivating love for God and the souls of men, the zeal to take the gospel to the lost, and the willingness to get up and go to work. Persecution and other negatives that will result will only spread the Lord's cause more rapidly.

With whom do we begin? We begin with self. Yes, we as individual Christians must decide that we belong to the Lord and that He has asked us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15).

Where do we begin? We begin where we are. There are family members who need to be taught, friends, those with whom we go to school and with whom we work. There are people all around us who need the gospel.

When do we begin? Right now. There is not a minute to waste because we are already very late in doing this work. Souls are lost and are dying without God and without hope. It is up to us to rescue all that we can.

What will be our strategy? To make plans to set goals and then reach them, and to make more plans and to set new goals. Each success will encourage us to go on to greater heights and accomplishments.

Jesus said, "*Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest*" (John 4:35). Again, He said, "*The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send labourers into the harvest*" (Luke 10:2). My brethren, will we be a part of the solution, or a part of the problem? Will we hear the Lord's call and go out to sow the seed and to bring in the harvest?

May the Lord help us to do **what we can while we can**, that we might take the gospel to India and to the world.

Marriage Commitment

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

In this age of immorality, broken marriages, "no fault" divorce, what can the caring person do to ensure that his/her marriage is durable, made of strong enough stuff to last through the years and all the challenges that will come with those years?

Some would say, "Build your marriage on **like-mindedness**" Certainly, if two people have similar values, enjoy similar things, and have personalities that are much alike, they should be able to move along smoothly toward their life goals.

But in growing through the changes of life, sometimes people themselves change so drastically that a mate can be "outgrown" or left behind.

Others would suggest that a strong marriage must be built on love. Yes, love—in all its many aspects of nurturing and cherishing—love is an important factor.

But sometimes love that has flourished also dies. Can the marriage survive?

Someone else has wisely said that most marriages today lack total **commitment**. If a man and woman make a commitment to the marriage from the beginning determined to subordinate their own wishes and self-interests for the welfare of the marriage, it is most likely that such a relationship will grow stronger and sweeter with the years.

But there are occasions when for one reason or the other, one partner or the other either ceases to put the commitment first or ceases to "deserve" that degree of unswerving loyalty—and so, the marriage may become endangered.

The weakness with all of these priorities in the husband/wife relationship is that they are built on human-to-human behaviour. And the problem with that kind of foundation is that humans fall short of perfection, and humans act and react in relation to each other.

Like-mindedness is a wonderful asset to any marriage, as

long as the likeness remains. **Love** is a wonderful asset as long as both remain lovable, and as long as both cherish and nurture the other. **Commitment to each other** is a wonderful asset, as long as they remain mutually committed. But since it is not uncommon for one marriage partner to behave in such a way that a negative and ugly response is aroused in the heart of the mate, then a marriage that is dependent on one or more of these factors may break up in stormy seas.

What is the basis of a strong marriage? I believe it is **commitment to God**. Does the answer seem unlikely? Consider these thoughts:

In contrast to the human-to-human relationship, this is a human-to-God relationship, which means that one element does not change. He is an absolute, One on whom we can fix our lives and know that He will remain constant.

Therefore, fixing our lives on Him, what does He require *if the human-to-God relationship is to be maintained*? He requires our **love** (*"you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."* Matthew 22:37).

He requires our **obedience** (*"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* John 14:15).

Within the framework of that love and that obedience to His commands lie all the rules regarding human relationships. He makes it clear that in order to maintain a living relationship with Him and His children, we must be obedient to His rules regarding fellow human beings. Husbands must be faithful in their marriage, or forfeit as well their relationship with God.

So, in such a marriage, built on an enduring commitment to God, if the human-to-human likeness dissipates, God's requirements of mutual consideration as outlined in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 remain in force and must be obeyed, if the relationship with Him is to remain intact.

If **emotional love** ship-wrecks because of human-to-human failure, God's command to the husband in Ephesians 5, to *"... so love his own wife as himself ..."* still applies, and the husband must be obedient if he is to have God's approval.

Likewise, *"... let the wife see that she respects her husband ..."* controls the attitude of the wife in the human-to-human relationship, if her relationship to God is to remain intact.

Colossians 3:24 explains: *"And whatever you do, do it*

heartily, as to the Lord . . ." When a human's commitment is, first of all, to God and then to human relationships—husband/wife, parent/child, neighbour, business partner, whatever they may be—God is both the basis and the control factor for attitudes, words, and behaviour, even on the human-to-human scale. The **eternal commitment** to Him safeguards us in our daily dealings with each other.

God Hates

FRANCIS DAVID

The wise Man Solomon writes and tells us that God hates seven things. In the book of Proverbs, he says: "These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to HIM: A proud look, a lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devices wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to do evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren. (Prov. 6:16-19).

God hates all sins but these are the sins which are very common among humans. These sins destroy us and make our lives worthless before our almighty. Isaiah the prophet said these words to people who were indulging themselves in all kinds of sins, he tells them: But your iniquities have separated you from your God: And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear (Isa. 59:2).

God hates a proud look. When a person is proud, haughty, God is displeased with it. When a person is proud then he just thinks himself and he is selfish. He considers other lower than him. In Prov. 16:5, we read that Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord . . ." A haughty look, a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked are sin. (Prov. 21:4). God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6). Our God wants us to be humble and as Christians we must be clothed with humility (I Pet. 5:5).

God hates a lying tongue. How many times we indulge in lying? The strong relationships sometimes are destroyed with lying tongue. Through lying we may deceive man, but we cannot

deceive God. Lying lips are an abomination unto Jehovah. (Prov. 12:22). Writing to Christians at Colosse, Paul says: "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds." (Col. 3:9). How is our mind? are we pure in mind? if not, then we will feel no hesitation to speak a lie with our fellow men.

God also hates those who shed innocent blood. In our world we see how people are killing each other. Everyday we read in the newspapers that so many murders take place. Recently we have seen so many innocent people have been killed in recent communal violence. God hates all killings of innocent people.

God hates a heart that devices wicked plans. When someone's Mind is wicked then his life is wicked. There are people who always device evil plans to destroy someone's image. As Christians we should not harbour evil thinking. The people who killed Jesus and crucified him had evil mind against Him. Evil minds always think evil.

God hates feet that are swift in running to do evil: There are people who are always ready to do evil. The wise man says, they are swift and quick to do evil thing. In Gen. 6:5-6 we read that "the Lord was sorry that He had made man on earth, and He saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Solomon the wise man advises that we should fear the Lord and depart from evil. (Prov. 3:7). He that would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit (I Pet. 3:10).

God hates a False witness. What do we see around us? There are innocent people who have been wrongly implicated in false cases because someone gave the false witness. Many innocent people have to face the penalty or punishment, because of this evil thing. We see in the ten commandments, that God instructed His people that they should not bear false witness against their neighbour. False witness, is a dirty game, and you may destroy someone's good name or reputation because of this sin. As Christians we must guard ourselves.

God hates one who sows discord among the brethren. The church is the body of Christ. We must love the church and love the brethren and must avoid such actions which can divide the church. The Lord is not pleased when some members try to create problems in the church. Some people are not satisfied

unless they sow the seed of discord. Sometimes we try to find faults and forget about the good things being done by the brethren. If you are a fault finder in the church then you must correct yourself because of your wrong action you may damage the body of Christ. Lets be in unity.

Yes, God hates all sins and we as Christians must do the same. God is there to forgive us if we come to Him with sincere hearts. He has promised that though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be as red as crimson, they shall be as wool (Isa. 1:18). If you are not a child of God, and if you want to be washed of your sins then today is the time to come to Him. Paul says: "Now is the day of salvation." (II Cor. 6:2). You can become a Christian by believing in Jesus (Mark 16:16), confessing Jesus as the Son of God (Rom. 10:10) by repenting of your sins (Acts 17:30; Lk. 13:3), and being baptised in the watery grave (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:4).

Let the Bible Answer

ROBERT MEREDITH

When was the Lord's church established? The Bible foretold of the time when Jesus would establish His church. Jesus pointed to its establishment, and Luke reveals it to us. In the religious world today some contend that Christ's church was built in the days of John the Baptist. But Jesus said His church was still in future in Matthew 16:18, and John's death is recorded in Matthew 14:10. Others are members of churches built in the 1500's or later. Let us turn to the scriptures to see when the Lord's church was established.

The Old Testament prophesied of the time the church would be built. Daniel 2:44 informs us that it would be built in the days of the Roman Empire. Furthermore, Isaiah 2:2-3 and Micah 4:1-2 both say that it will occur during the "last days." Today, people often declare that we are in the "last days" and this is true. But we have been in the "last days" for 2000 years now. The "last days" simply means the last dispensation of time. Peter, quoting from the prophet Joel, said, "*And it shall come to pass in the last*

days . . ." (Acts 2:17). Peter was pointing out how God was fulfilling the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 and declared that they were in the "last days." Also, the Hebrew writer wrote that he was in the "last days" in Hebrews 1:2. So the church was to be built during the period of time known as the "last days" which began with Christ. The prophet Daniel also reveals for man that the kingdom would be established after the messiah had ascended back to Heaven (Dan. 7:13-14).

While on earth, Jesus taught concerning His church. As mentioned earlier, Jesus said He would build His church (Mt. 16:18-19), showing us that it had not been established yet. In Mark 9:1 Jesus stated that it would come into existence during the lifetime of some who were present when He spoke and that it would come with power. In Luke 24:49, Jesus told the apostles to remain in Jerusalem "*Until ye be endued with power from on high.*" Jesus also told the apostles that the power would be the Holy Spirit coming upon them (Acts 1:8). All of these statements by the Christ help us to pinpoint the establishment of the church. The kingdom was to come with power, the power would come upon the apostles while they were in Jerusalem, and the power would be from the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2, one can see all of the Old Testament prophecies and Jesus' statements concerning the church fulfilled. The church was established on the Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"Be Strong and Courageous" (2)

DAVID THURMAN

In last month's article, we saw that God commanded Joshua to take the land of Canaan. God had told Joshua to lead God's people into the promised land. God had spelled out the length and breadth of the territory they would conquer. God was at the centre of the process, and He demanded obedience from Joshua and all the people of Israel.

As churches and Christians today strive to "*take the land set before them,*" they, too, can learn from God's instructions to Joshua. We have already seen that God sets the vision before

us. It was God Who defined the task before His people, and promised the strength to do it. God defines the task before us as well.

We have also seen that we must put the past behind us and move forward. Moses has died. The mantle of leadership of the people has changed, passing onto Joshua's shoulders. Now the new leader must move forward and not dwell on the past.

Finally, we saw that we must not turn aside from the leading of God. Joshua was reminded not to turn left or right, but be diligent in obeying the law God had given His people. Churches today need to put the past behind them, grab hold of God's vision for the church and develop a spirit of obedience to the will of God. Lets look at some other principles of leadership God gave to Joshua.

RELY ON GOD'S PROMISES

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people. . ." (Josh. 1:9-10). One of the biggest mistakes many Christians and church leaders make is trying to accomplish God's plan without relying on God's promises. After laying out the task ahead of them, God reminds Joshua, again, that He will be with him. God reminds His chosen leader, again not to be afraid. Perhaps Joshua seemed worried or was literally trembling at the daunting task set before him. We really cannot know. But, whether or not he was scared, God reminds Joshua again that God will be with him.

We, too, need to go out to face the foe with the promises of God ringing in our ears. As we face a world that is in pursuit of pleasure, it can seem as if no one is very interested in coming to God. The task can seem overwhelming. It is in just such times we need to be reminded of God's many promises to His people today. *"And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matt. 28:20). *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?"* (Rom. 8:31). *"And upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it"* (Matt. 16:18). Over and over again Jesus and God remind us that we will be successful in our service, if we will rise up to take

the land. When that task seems too big or too frightening, we also need to rely on God's promises of victory.

WE MUST HAVE A PLAN

"Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 'Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, to possess it' " (Josh. 1:10-11): When Joshua went to the people, he went with a plan. The plan included the time to move and the resources needed to accomplish the move. Joshua was doing what God commanded, but he also put together a plan to carry out all of the commands of God.

This plan was what we would call logistics: how to move people and provisions so as to have enough to do what God wanted done. Churches, Christians and church leaders today need to have a plan to reach the lost. They need a plan to build up the saved. They need to obey the will of God, but they also need to know what resources are available and needed to carry out the commands of God today. That plan might include materials (Bibles, class materials, tracts) or it might include manpower (people to make calls, to pray and so on). But, as we move to take the land, we should not go off in all directions, but with a plan.

WE MUST SHARE THE PLAN

"Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 'Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, to possess it' " (Josh. 1:10-11). Joshua did not just come up with a plan He saw to it that the plan was passed throughout the camp so everyone would understand what was about to happen. The people Joshua was leading had seen their parents' generation die off because of lack of faith. Joshua wanted this generation to take the land as God commanded. To do that, they all needed to hear the plan, know the plan and follow the plan. Joshua wanted

everyone in the camp on the same page so there would be no failure due to lack of information or preparation.

Churches today need the same from leaders and workers. It is not enough to have a good plan of evangelism in a community. That plan must be shared with the people who are going to take the land. It is not enough to have a great system for building up the church if that plan is kept private. Sharing the plan equips people to do what God wants them to do. Secrecy creates doubt. Information creates power.

HAVE EVERYONE PULL TOGETHER

"And to the Reubenites and the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, Remember the word, which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God gives you rest, and will give you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors and shall help them, until the LORD gives your brothers rest, as He gives you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise" (Josh. 1:12-15). The tribes mentioned above had desired to settle on the east side of the river Jordan instead of going over the river and settling in Canaan proper. God had allowed them to do that, but had commanded them to help their brothers take the land of Canaan. Joshua reminds them they still have a task ahead to them, even though their families have settled in the land beyond the Jordan. Joshua wanted everyone among the people of God to be part of the great task ahead. He wanted unity and harmony so that the great work could be done.

If there is any ingredient missing from many bodies of believers today it is the spirit of unity. In its place there seems to be a spirit of wanting only what is best from the individual. But if Christians and churches are going to grab onto God's vision to take the land, they must grab hold of each other and rise up TOGETHER to do it. God never sends us out alone, He sends us out hand in hand with other believers.

In fact, our unity is central to convicting the lost that we are the genuine people. *"I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me"* (John 17:20-21). When Christians try to act in isolation, or away from the body, they cannot have the influence or impact they would have if they worked with other believers to carry out the will of God. For the people of God to take the land today, we must work together in a spirit of harmony to save the lost and build up the saved. *"Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God"* (Phil. 1:27-28). We are to stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving *together* for the faith of the gospel.

THEY TOOK THE LAND

"And they answered Joshua, saying, All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous" (Josh. 1:16-18).

When Joshua grasped God's vision, trusted in God's promises, laid out his plan before the people, and brought everyone on board the plan, the people responded with courage and faith. In fact, they called on Joshua to be strong and courageous. They asked their leader not to lose heart. And, best of all, they promised to follow obediently. Remember, these are the sons and daughters of a failed generation. Their forefathers had failed to take the land. Now their children will succeed, because of the way they were led.

Churches and Christians all across the land hunger today for such leaders. We need men who will rise up and grasp God's vision for the church in this sin-darkened world (Phil. 2:15), men

who will rely on God's promises men who will make plans, lay them out and generate unity. Then the church today will rise up, in faith, and go forward to take the land.

“Thou Shalt Worship The Lord Thy God”

THOMAS F. EAVES SR.

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Poetically worship has been defined as, “Man climbing the altar stairs to God.” The dictionary defines worship as, “Worthiness, repute, respect, reverence paid to a divine being.” Others have defined worship as, “Profound respect mingled with fear and affection; veneration. A token of respect or veneration; an obeisance.”

In the New Testament, the most common word translated “worship” is PROSKUNEO which has the basic meaning of, to kiss toward. It appears sixty times and is defined as follows, to do obeisance to, to prostrate oneself, do reverence to.

Acceptable Worship Involves a Conscious Effort

Worship is not an act that one engages in accidentally, neither it a spectator activity, rather it is an activity in which the worshipper puts forth a conscious effort to accomplish God's will. In Genesis is the account of Cain and Abel worshipping God (Genesis 4:3-4). Moses wrote that God had respect for Abel's offering but not for Cain's. The Hebrew writer tells us, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” (Hebrews 11:4). Abel's sacrifice was by faith and since faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17), Abel made a conscious effort and followed God's instructions.

When Abraham was obeying God's instructions concerning Isaac (Genesis 22:2; see also Genesis 22:11-12; Hebrews 11:17-18), he told his young men, “Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come

again unto you" (Genesis 22:5). Abraham made a conscious effort to go to the place designated by God for the purpose of worshipping. God's children also assemble at designated places for the purpose of worshipping Him.

Jesus, in conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, instructed her that under the Jewish law, Jerusalem was the proper place to worship (John 4:20-22). The Ethiopian nobleman traveled from his homeland to Jerusalem for the purpose of worshipping (Acts 8:28).

Acceptable Worship Involves Several Characteristics

OBEDIENCE—In the days of Malachi the prophet, the priests were accused of despising the name of Jehovah because they were not following God's instructions concerning sacrifices. Instead of offering Jehovah sacrifices which met His specifications, they were offering polluted bread, blind, lame, and sick animals (Malachi 1:6-8). Because of this disobedience, their sacrifices were rejected. In the New Testament, Jesus declared that worship was to be in spirit (from the heart) and truth (John 4:24). To worship in truth is to worship according to God's instructions (John 17:17).

ATTITUDE—Jesus spoke a parable to certain men who trusted in themselves (not God) that they were righteous and set all others at nought (Luke 18:9). A Pharisee and a publican (tax collector) went up to worship (pray). The Pharisee's worship was rejected because of his ungodly attitude. The publican's worship was accepted because he worshipped with an acceptable attitude (Luke 18:9-14).

A PURE LIFE—God told the Jews in the time of Amos that He despised their worship and emphatically told them that He would not accept it.

The reason? The Jews were walking in disobedience to God's Word (Amos 5:21-24). Jehovah spoke to the Jews through Isaiah and told them that He considered their worship as nothing more than trampling His courts and that He would hide His eyes from them (Isaiah 1:11-17). The reason Jehovah would not accept their worship is vividly described earlier in the same chapter (Isaiah 1:2-9). Christians are to offer their spiritual sacrifices as HOLY priests (I Peter 2:5). **PURE WORSHIP CANNOT COME FROM AN IMPURE LIFE.**

Four Types of Worship

God's Word informs us that there are four types of worship which man can engage in but only one is acceptable to God.

1. False Worship—(Jeremiah 19:5). Israel's worship to Ball was false worship and an abomination unto God.

2. Will Worship—(Colossians 2:18-23, especially verse 23).

3. Vain Worship—(Matthew 15:7-9).

4. True Worship—(John 4:23). This is the only one that God will accept.

Worship is an opportunity of a lifetime. May God help us to worship Him in spirit and truth, in order that He may be glorified and that we as Christians may benefit from the fellowship with Him and our fellow Christians.

Jesus As Pictured In Scripture

CHARLES BOX

Jesus the Son of God, is pictured in many beautiful ways throughout the Scriptures. Each time we are allowed to look at Jesus in the Bible should draw us closer to Him. "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12:32).

Jesus Christ is the Son of the Loving God

"Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Peter made a simple and bold confession of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the Christ, the great Prophet, Priest, and King; the Messiah promised—in past generations. Jesus is the Son of the living God. He has life in Himself. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God?

Jesus Christ is the Savior of the World

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Luke states the purpose of Jesus coming to the world. Jesus literally came to call sinners to repentance. "But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but

sinner to repentance" (Matthew 9:13). Jesus came from heaven to earth to seek, for the purpose of saving, that which was lost. Have you allowed Jesus to become your Savior?

Jesus is a Teacher Come From God

"There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him" (John 3:1-2). Christ was a Teacher from God. He was supported by divine authority (Matthew 28:18). He was a Teacher by inspiration. Jesus came as a Teacher from God into a world of darkness and ignorance. He came into the world as Light and Truth. Are you learning and following this "Teacher sent from God?"

Jesus is—"Jesus"—The one who would save his people from their Sins

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). His name is "Jesus". The reason for the name is, "He shall save His people from their sins. He is willing to be Savior of all who will come to Him. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him, take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). Jesus saves from the guilt of sin by His blood. He saves from the control of sin by the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:22-24). Have you allowed Jesus to save you from your sins?

Jesus is the Anointed of God

"And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). God said Jesus was "His Son." Jesus is the Son of God by supernatural conception. "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). He is God's Son because of His great work as our Redeemer from sin. God

exalted Jesus as "His anointed." Also, "I will make Him MY firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth" (Psalm 89:27). It is easy to see God's love when we recognize that He did not withhold His only begotten Son. "Behold! My Servant Whom I uphold, My Elect One in Whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:1). Have you, by faith, accepted and obeyed God's anointed?

Jesus is the Author and Finisher of Our Faith

"Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted of bloodshed, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:1-4). We must set Jesus before us constantly as the author and finisher of our faith. He is our sacrifice, example, and encouragement. Jesus is the Beginning and the Ending of our salvation. Our duty is to look to Jesus. Which direction are you looking in your life?

Jesus is Emmanuel (God with us)

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

Jesus is God's Great Prophet

"For Moses truly said to the fathers, The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:22-23).

Jesus is Alpha and Omega

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8).

Jesus is Our Advocate

"My little children these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

Jesus is the True Vine

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser" (John 15:1).

Jesus is Our Great High Priest

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1).

Jesus is the Way, Truth and Life

"Jesus said to him, I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Jesus is the Sacrifice for Sin

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

The Son of God loved you and gave His life for you (Galatians 2:20). This great truth changed the life of Paul and it can change your life also. The cross remains God's drawing power (John 12:32). We preach Christ crucified! As long as I remember who Jesus is and what He did for me on the cross, I will be His willing slave for life. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Seeking The Lost

GLENN A. POSEY

Luke 19:10 says, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Christ's mission in this world was to make possible man's salvation. The cross is man's only hope (1 Corinthians 1:18-24). But what about man's part in seeking the lost? It calls for:

1. A Willing Mind

"For if there be first a willing mind . . ." (II Corinthians 8:12). A willingness to work. A willingness to seek the lost. Service divorced from will won't last. There must be commitment to a cause.

2. A Total Conviction

Sin must be defined before the sinner can be identified. There must be a deep conviction concerning objective truth. Sin is "transgression of the law of God" (I John 3:4). The Gospel is God's power to save (Romans 1:16). Man is lost until he obeys the Gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-2).

3. A Spirit of Cooperation

"Let us" must characterize every member of the church (Nehemiah 2:17-18). Man is not an island within himself. The great commission "go ye" demands cooperation (Matthew 28:19). Seeking the lost is world wide (Mark 16:15). It is one huge task.

4. A Sense of Urgency

Every funeral procession reminds us of life's reality—death (Hebrews 9:27). It's now or never for millions everyday. The urgency of reaching the lost is unparalleled. We must act now, or forever be silenced by closed doors.

5. An Empathetic Heart

Not sympathy, but empathy (standing in another's shoes). If I were not a Christian, what would I need Christians to do for me? Jesus commanded Christians to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Why? The answer is clear, "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

6. A Joyful Duty

To have the mind of Christ, one must display His attitude: ". . . Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross . . ." (Hebrews 12:2). Seeking the lost becomes a joyful task when viewed with a Christ-like mind (Philippians 2:5). Seeking the lost must be the evangelistic thrust of our Lord's church.

Overcoming The Past

JOHNNY RAMSEY

In our victory over sin, no battle is more important than the struggle we face in overcoming the past. The devil tries hard to dishearten us concerning the mistakes of yesterday. Conversely, no blessing from heaven exceeds the joy we know in the forgiveness of sins. One of the brightest contributions of Christianity is the realization that God is merciful toward unrighteousness: *Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more*" (Heb. 8:12). When we truly come into a covenant relationship with our Maker, our iniquities are blotted out (Acts 3:19).

In 1750 Oliver Goldsmith wrote of "memory as a fond deceiver that turns all the past to pain." Aristotle, quoting a contemporary, bluntly stated, "Even God cannot change the past." It is true that *"bread cast upon the water will return again"* (Eccle. 11:1) and we do reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7). But our Creator has the power to give us a new start where error is cleansed and sin is remembered no more (Heb. 10:12; 1 John 1:7).

John Mark lived long enough to overcome his past selfishness, and the Bible's final references to him are exceedingly favourable (2 Tim. 4:11). Even the immoral man from whom the Corinthian church had to withdraw to the fold of truth (1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2). The most memorable parable of Jesus is the thrilling saga of a prodigal son who came back home (Luke 15). There certainly is a land of beginning again! It is far better than the fountain of youth or a magic lamp—it is *"the new and living way"* that Christ provides (Heb. 10:20). The poet wistfully wrote:

*I wish there were some wonderful place
Called the land of beginning again,
Where all our mistakes and heartaches,
And all our poor, selfish grief
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat
At the door—and never put on again.*

In view of these sentiments that we all share, was it not a

glorious act of kindness that Jesus poured out on Simon Peter in John 21? Just before the Lord went back to heaven, he gave the apostle who had denied Him three times a three-fold opportunity to confess his love and loyalty! That day would never be forgotten by the one who had wept bitterly over his cowardice when Jesus was on trial (Matt. 26:69-75), but now could affirm his devotion to the Master.

Zaccheus promised to clean up his past as far as possible (Luke 19) and Paul preached *"the faith he had once destroyed"* (Gal. 1:23). To be a new creation in the Lord is the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24). The way of truth is so powerful that even the Corinthians and the Cretans of the first century left debauchery and turned to the Lord. There is no finer phrase concerning the power of the gospel than the one in 1 Cor. 6:9-11, where all the terrible immoralities of the Roman Empire are listed, and then Paul says, *"And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."* When sinners repent, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of heaven (Luke 15:10). Jehovah is the kind of teacher who enjoys using his eraser to wipe out our past mistakes. But we do have to correct our errors according to His standard of truth.

Sadly, some brethren today try to "play like" sins are forgiven when they are not. This just compounds the problem. We dare not fill the church with sinners, just because we have an obsession concerning numerical growth. After all, the Lord will only add to the church *"such as are being saved"* (Acts 2:47), and impenitent people are not in that number. God still says, *"Repent, and be baptized"* (Acts 2:38), and baptism without true repentance is just a mockery. Long fellow brilliantly stated over a century ago what sinners need to heed:

Let the dead past bury its dead,

Act act in the living present."

Wordsworth was exactly right when he told men not to sigh for the past, but to make the future sure! Only in Christ can this be a joyous reality. When the gospel overwhelms our lives, our fellow-men may *"think it strange"* (1 Pet. 4:4), but the Judge of all the earth will say, *"Well done."* We can overcome the past in the name of Jesus (Col. 3:17).

Two Hearts

DAVID MACY

The Bible heart is the mind of man which thinks, reasons, understands, believes, intends and loves. Two hearts are pictured quite vividly in the Holy Scriptures. One is the wicked heart which is filled with evil thoughts and rebels against God. The other is the righteous heart which is filled with good thoughts and is in subjection to God's holy will.

The wicked heart brings misery and death to its owner. The righteous heart brings joy, peace, and life eternal. The wicked heart can be transformed into a righteous one by the power of the Almighty God. But, only those who believe in God's Son and obey His commandments will experience this wonderful transformation. In the wicked heart, thoughts are evil. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). God looked down on man before the flood and saw that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually. Every thought was evil and corrupt like a fountain springing from a polluted source. Every wish, desire and motive of these degraded people was corrupt. This is a fitting description of many precious people today who are on the wrong track because their hearts are not right. Corrupt desires and plans continually issue forth and this can only lead down the road to disappointment, misery, and ruin.

All sin originates in the heart. "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:35). A righteous man has a treasure of good things stored up in his heart at all times. When the need arises, he simply withdraws a portion of this treasure and blesses those who need this assistance. The heart of a wicked man is a storehouse of evil thoughts and desires. Daily, he makes withdrawals from the evil treasure. Don't you want your heart to be filled with good things so you can be a rich blessing to the world every day you live?

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